carolina country

the monthly magazine of north carolina's electric cooperatives

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Volume 29, No.12, December 1997

Memories of Christmas in Carolina Country - pages 12-17

An Important Announcement to North Carolina Homeowners with Equity . . . .

What Would You Do With An Extra $3,600 to $12,000 per year?

How to Get a Fast Mortgage Loan To Pay Off All Your Bills**

(Even If You've Been Turned Down By A Bank Or Mortgage Company)

Rockingham, N.C. - Ray and Becky were frustrated. They'd bought the house 12 years ago and it was five years old when they moved in. Becky laughed out loud when she thought back to that time. Back then it seemed so big and beautiful. But now, 12 years and 3 kids later, the house felt small and run down. The house needed a new roof and her two youngest girls, Emily and Katie, were doubling up in the small 10 x 12 bedroom.

Five years ago, Ray and Becky had a contractor come and talk to them about a new addition. Becky remembered how excited she and Ray both were. They even paid to have the plans drawn up. But that was the year before Ray lost his job at the plant. She poured herself another cup of coffee and recalled how depressed they both were. It was over a year before he got another job. And during that time, they got behind on everything.

No Summer Vacation

They were so strapped for money one summer, they couldn't even take Emily and Katie to the beach for a few days for their annual vacation. Sure they finally got all caught up when Ray went back to work, it took them two years and by that time it had ruined their previously perfect credit record, it was a vicious cycle. You know, getting paid on Friday, sitting down on Saturday to pay bills and running out of money before all the bills are paid.

"I Hit A Brick Wall"

After they got caught up they tried again to borrow the money for the addition. First they got turned down by the local bank, then a mortgage company in town rejected them. They just kept hitting the same brick wall. Even though Ray had gone back to work in another carpet mill making MORE money, the late payments that showed up on his credit reports scared the local banks and mortgage companies away. Ray felt like he was working JUST to pay his monthly bills and doing nothing for himself, Becky or the kids. Then he ran into Harvest Mortgage Company. Harvest helped him get a loan to pay off all his bills and consolidate everything into one single payment that was $358 lower than he had been making. That saved him a whopping $4,296 per year, TAX FREE. In the first year, that was enough money to close in the back porch, AND enough left over for new bikes for the kids.

Home Equity is the Key

Carole Eskew, Sr., V.P.

"If you have a minimum of 20% equity or more, there's a good chance we can help you save a lot of money every month by combining old bills and your old mortgage into one new and much lower payment. Or, we can help you get cash out of your home to buy a vacation home, start a business, whatever."

Compare your budget to this:

Amt.	Owed	Payment
$12,000	2nd Mortgage	$200.00
8,500	Auto Loan	375.00
2,000	VISA	100.00
2,000	MasterCard	100.00
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-After Harvest Mortgage -

New Payment: $187.82/mo.

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** Rates subject to change*

"I couldn't believe it. We closed our loan 9 days after the first day I talked to them on the phone."

Debbie C., Dallas

"We ended up paying off all our bills and rolling them all into one single payment. After we did, our total monthly payments dropped by almost $400 per month."

Billy and Judy., Columbus

"Thanks to you and your great company, we feel reborn. Words can not express the relief we feel. We are so glad this battle with the bills is almost over."

James and Laurie C.

Recent Loans Include:

- A $45,000 loan to a borrower in bankruptcy.
- A $100,000 loan to a borrower who couldn't verify income through tax returns.
- A $95,000 bill-consolidation loan that saved the borrower over $8,100 per year and a whopping $124,000 over the loan period.

(No singlewides, please)

No Ivory Towers

"When you apply for a loan at Harvest Mortgage, your loan request is reviewed and decid upon by the people right in our office," says Harvest executive. He added, "Since we are direct lenders, we don't send the information some guys off somewhere in New York or California. We review and approve loans rig here in town locally."

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That means we can get your loan closed in a matter of days, and you never have to go ou your living room until you're ready to close.

Loan For Purchase or Refinan

Harvest Mortgage officials report that whet you are buying, refinancing a house, just looking to consolidate some bills, get cash f your property, they have created programs t give you the money you're looking for. Different loan programs include:

- Loans to Borrowers with good credit, w the most competitive rates in the countr These are available for purchasing a ne home or refinancing.
- Loans to borrowers with a lot of equity homeowners who have slow credit or h e even been bankrupt.
- Cash out loans for investment property itl a lot of equity.
- Loans for borrowers who want to do additions or remodel their homes.

Check This Out For Fre

To see how much money you may be able t get and exactly how much your payments woul e, you can check it out by just picking up the p one and calling us. Be sure to ask for Carolyn R at **1-800-972-LEND (5363)**. Or for a **FREE** r ort on **HOW Harvest Mortgage** can work for you all toll-free **1-888-697-LOAN (5626)** for a 24-hou recorded message. All of this doesn't cost you a me, so you owe it to yourself. Don't put this off any nger. Do it now while you're thinking about it! You h e got nothing to lose and everything to gain. Call No

Harvest Mortgage Company Inc.

Mortgage Bankers

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Volume 29, No. 12, December 1997

carolina country

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Angel, Calvary Episcopal Church, Tarboro. From a series of fine art originals by photographer Frederica Georgia, who tints each black-and-white image with oils and pastels. For information about the series, contact Gallery 9 on Highway 105 in Foscoe at (704) 963-6068. The gallery is open daily from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Freddie can be reached at (704) 297-6484

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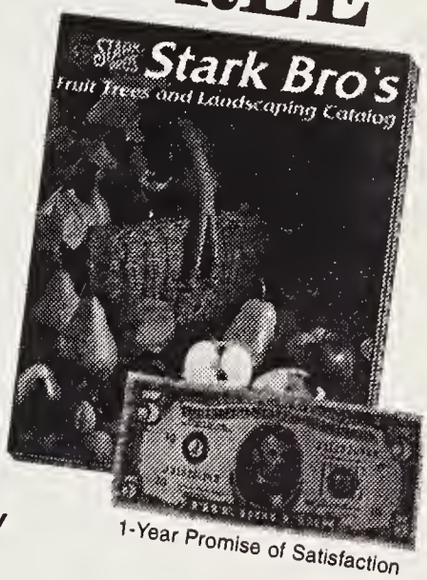

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Commentary

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Co-op employees know their business

By Richard H. Johnson

As 1997 draws to a close, I'd like to give special recognition to electric cooperative employees. While the electric utility industry becomes more competitive, the way we will do business in the future remains largely unclear so far. For employees, this means dedicating themselves to work as usual while at the same time preparing for change. Fortunately, devotion to duty seems to be a trait among co-op employees.

People who work for local cooperatives generally are knowledgeable, careful and enthusiastic about what they do. I think it's because our employees not only know what they're doing, but they know whom they do it for. The people and businesses who depend on the cooperatives' services are our employees' friends and neighbors. Our customers are no different than our own families. I think that's why our employees really care about providing safe, reliable service no matter what it is that they do.

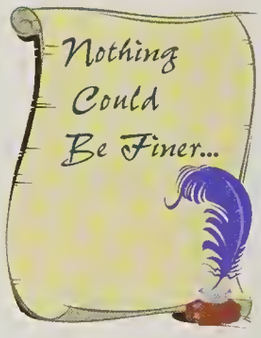
In addition to knowing how to install or repair utility lines, our line crews know the lay of the land, the neighborhoods and the homes served by those lines. In addition to knowing our systems for metering, rates, billing and accounting, our office staffs know about the people who call and visit our offices. In addition to knowing the utility requirements of a large business or farm, the design of underground service lines and how to communicate with members, our employees actually know the people they are working for.

It's no surprise to me that according to nationwide research, 82 percent of electric cooperative consumers consider it important that the people who provide their electricity are based locally.

To the 2,500 dedicated co-op employees throughout North Carolina, I extend a big thank-you. We will continue to face challenges in 1998, and I know we'll do well.

Richard H. Johnson of Wadesboro is president of the board of directors of Pee Dee Electric Membership Corporation. He also chairs the co-ops' statewide Association Services Committee. Pee Dee EMC serves 18,000 members in Anson, Richmond, Montgomery, Scotland, Moore, Stanly and Union counties.

Send in your stories. Earn $50



Carolina Country begins next month its series "Nothing Could Be Finer," featuring your stories and pictures.

In January, we'll run a selection of "Predictions 1998: Your best guesses for what will happen in North Carolina." (The deadline for submissions was November 25.)

Here are the themes for the coming months. Send us your stories and pictures. Carolina Country judges will select the best four or five for publication and pay $50 to each one selected.

The Rules

1. 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Diskette, e-mail, or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
4. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
5. Deadlines are firm.
6. Entries will be returned only in self-addressed, stamped envelopes. (We will not return others.)
7. Judges' decisions are final.
8. We pay $50 for each submission published.
9. Send to Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616. E-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com

Themes and Deadlines

February
The Finest Place to Live in North Carolina
Deadline: Dec. 15

March
The Finest "Furniture" I Ever Found
Deadline: Jan. 15

April
The Finest Joke I Ever Heard
Deadline: Feb. 15

May
The Finest North Carolina Vacation I Ever Had
Deadline: March 15

June
The Finest Job I Ever Had
Deadline: April 15

July
The Finest Meal I Ever Had
Deadline: May 15

August
The Finest Lesson I Ever Learned at School
Deadline: June 15

September
The Finest Pictures of North Carolina, a photo contest.
Deadline: July 15

October
You're So Fine: Why I Like My Electric Cooperative
Deadline: Aug.15

November
The Finest North Carolina Gift You Can Give
Deadline: Sept. 15

December
The Finest Story in North Carolina History
Deadline: Oct. 15

Santa, I live way down a country road in Alleghany County. Wouldn't it be better if you just e-mail that computer game to me?

(Donna Hardy is an editorial cartoonist who lives in Lenoir County. The Hardy farm is served by Tri-County Electric Membership Corporation.)

Who knew Charley Stokes?

I am a member of Edgecombe-Martin County EMC, and I wonder if anyone in the Wake EMC area of Vance and Franklin counties may be able to help me. My grandparents on my father's side are from there, and I am desperately seeking any information about my grandfather. I never met him because he was murdered before I was born when my father was a little boy. His name was Charley (Chas.) G. Stokes and my grandmother, who died in 1963, was Isabella.

If any readers knew them, or can remember the circumstances of my grandfather's death, I would be grateful to hear from them.

Teresa S. Smith
233 Powell Road
Rocky Mount, NC 27801

Why not call new area code 962?

Shortly after the first of next year our state utilities commission will double the number of telephone area codes in North Carolina from three to six. One of the new codes will be assigned to the area west of a line running roughly from Boone to Hickory to Rutherfordton.

As of this writing, none of the commissioners have sought my advice as to what the new three-digit code for Western North Carolina (where I live) should be. I feel sure this is an oversight. To show I can overlook a slight, I suggest 962 (i.e. WNC).

WNC is a mnemonic that should please all of us who live in the area, and it is easy to remember: WNC stands for WHY NOT CALL. Why not call, write, fax or e-mail the Utilities Commission and put in a plug for 962. Or just clip this out and send it to them at North Carolina Utilities Commission, P.O. Box 29515, Raleigh, NC 27626-0515.

Charles G. Joyner
Hendersonville

How about those paso finos?

It was really quite astonishing to read your article on horses in North Carolina and not see the paso finos. ["From Appaloosas to Palominos," October 1997] The Piedmont Paso Fino Horse Association is well known throughout the country (indeed, the world) for the activities of this fine breed. Each year at the N.C. State Fair a day is designated for paso finos, and they have become so popular that this time may be expanded. From Lexington to New Hill, and from Louisburg to Fremont, the paso finos are the smoothest ride in the world.

Carole Corwin

The paso fino breed may have been included in the "Other" category of the statewide equine survey Ms. Corwin refers to. Paso finos are considered to be the oldest breed of horses in the Western Hemisphere. Christopher Columbus brought them to North America on his second voyage, according to Fred Moretti, of the Paso Fino Horse Association. Moretti says that there are approximately 30,000 in North Carolina, mostly in the western part of the state.

We at Carolina Country wish all our readers and supporters a happy holiday season and a healthy, prosperous 1998.

Our mission is to produce a timely, helpful and enjoyable magazine for the members of North Carolina's electric cooperatives. We try to enrich the lives of our readers and their communities while conveying news, opinions, advice and ideas related to cooperatives and the electric utility business.

I am proud of these characters on the staff and all the publications work they do in support of cooperatives statewide. As for Jackie Pittman, the talented artist in Raleigh who drew this picture: I thought he was our friend.

–Michael Gery

N.C. electric utility study commission begins its work

The newly-formed Commission on the Future of Electric Service in North Carolina began meeting in November to consider issues surrounding competition in the state's electric utility industry. An interim report may be issued during the 1998 legislative session.

Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight (D-Dare) appointed nine state senators among the 23 members. They include co-chair David Hoyle (D-Gaston), who introduced the bill creating the study. Other senators are Walter Dalton (D-Rutherford), Roy Cooper (D-Nash), Fountain Odom (D-Mecklenburg), Bob Martin (D-Pitt), and Jim Forrester (R-Iredell).

Basnight also named three members to represent consumer interests: Sheila Ogle, president of Media Research Planning of Cary, representing commercial consumers; Charles McKeller, vice president of Glen Raven Mills, representing industrial consumers; and Mel Daniels, a former director of the municipal utilities consortium ElectriCities, representing residential consumers.

House Speaker Harold Brubaker (R-Randolph) also made nine appointments. They are co-chair Danny McComas (R-New Hanover), David Miner (R-Wake), Ed MacMahan (R-Mecklenburg), Frank Mitchell (R-Iredell), Walter Church (D-Burke) and Jerry Dockham (R-Davidson).

Other Brubaker appointments include John O. Toledano, Acme-McCrary Corporation, representing industry; Henry Knight, president of Electronics Unlimited, representing residential consumers; and Terry Callendar of NGC Corporation, a nationwide power marketer.

Gov. Jim Hunt appointed Richard Harkrader, an environmental representative.

Four other seats are held by the chief executive officers of Duke Energy, CP&L, ElectriCities and the N.C. Electric Membership Corp.

The commission is charged with study a vast number of complicated issues relating to deregulation in the utility industry, including

- Fairness and equity among all classes of customers
- Reliability of power
- Universal access
- Fair treatment of competing power suppliers
- Impact on tax revenues
- Alternative forms of regulation
- Stranded investment costs
- Separating electric power generation, transmission and distribution services
- Impact on economic development
- Impact on low-income consumers
- Renewable energy, conservation and efficiency programs

Donnie Joe Whitley, a lineman's lineman, retires after 40 years

Union EMC bid farewell September 30 to Donnie Joe Whitley, who quietly retired after 40 years of service.

Ever since joining the cooperative as a lineman in 1957, Whitley's unquestionable dedication and knowledge earned him respect throughout the state along with several honors. Since the 1970s, Whitley served as a trainer for North Carolina's electric cooperatives' statewide Apprentice Lineman Training School. He also was promoted to lineman supervisor for the Oakboro district.

Billy Ford, Union EMC's safety coordinator, was one of many linemen trained by Whitley in the apprentice program. "So many linemen just learning the trade have benefited from Donnie Joe's easygoing manner," he said. "His expertise, knowledge and way of working with people will be missed."

Whitley's dedication extends beyond the cooperative and into his community. He is a deacon at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church and a member of the Albemarle Optimist Club, VFW, DAV, American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. He also served as a county commissioner for Stanly County for 10 years and is a well-traveled airplane pilot.

"It's been a very rewarding career," Whitley said. "I have enjoyed serving the people through my work at Union EMC. If I had to do it all over again, I'd do it the same way."

Union EMC serves 35,700 members in Mecklenburg, Union, Cabarrus, Rowan and Stanly counties.

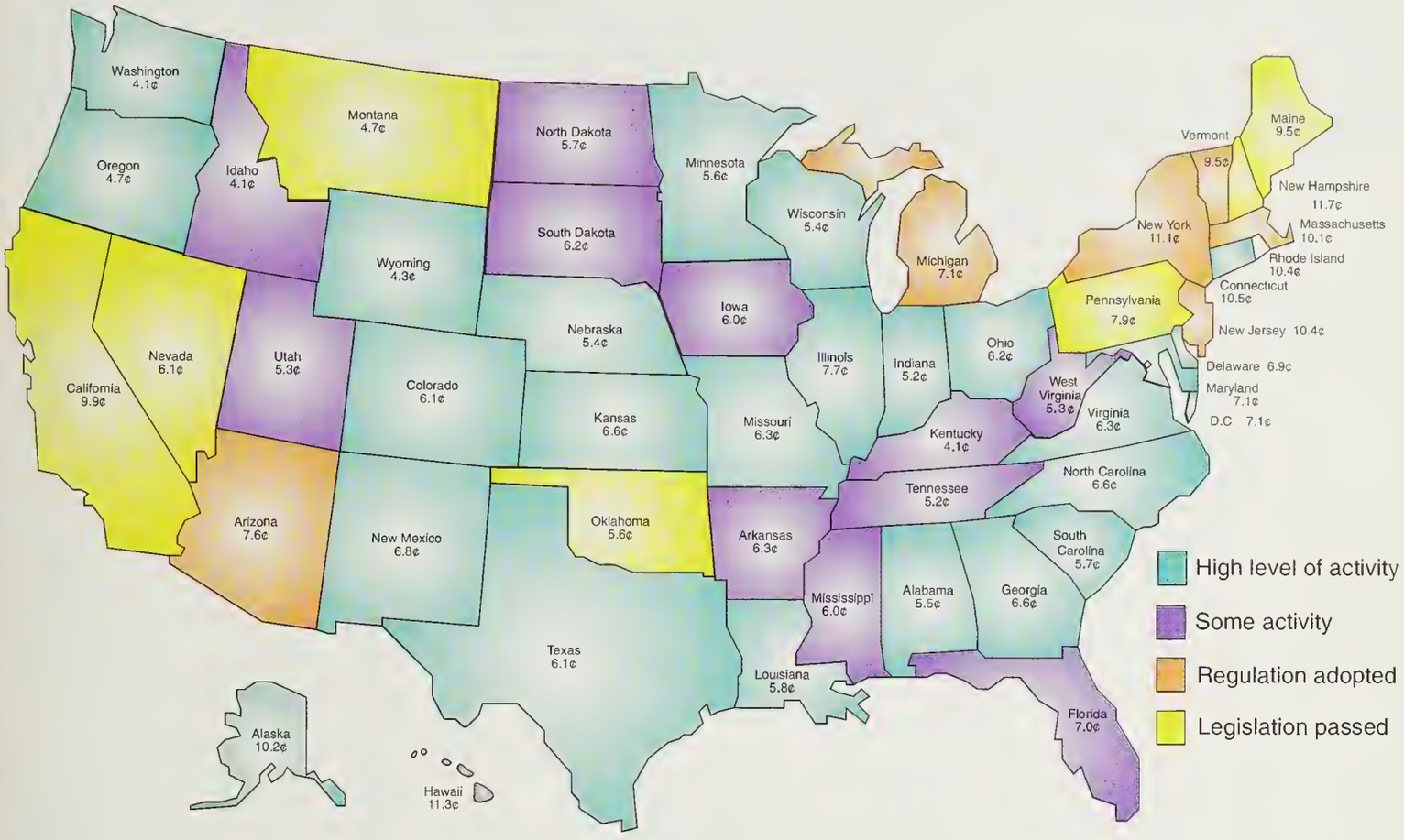
On the Record

The pace of electric utility deregulation

We've got to figure out what gives everybody a fair opportunity, and at the same time, we have the responsibility to ensure that customers situated in lots of different places aren't left out of all this – and certainly to ensure that they are not penalized by it.

We want to see it work. We're not complacent about it, and we want to see it happen as quickly as possible. I also think if you're going to look at the big picture and try to see what's going on, there has to be an acknowledgement that much of the pace will be determined by the companies. It's more and more in their control and less and less in ours."

Jo Anne Sanford Chairwoman
N. C. Utilities Commission
From the Raleigh N&O, July 13, 1997



Status of utility industry restructuring nationwide

This map shows the state-by-state status of utility restructuring as of September 1997, along with the average kilowatt-hour electricity rates. Restructuring activity ranges from those states that have enacted legislation or statewide regulations opening the utility industry to retail competition (either immediately or at a future date) to states that are studying such regulations (such as North Carolina) and those where very little activity is under way.

Source: National Electric Cooperative Assn

Looking for "Good Neighbors"?

Having problems in your area with municipal annexation? North Carolina's laws restricting municipal annexation are among the weakest in the nation. Citizens in our neighboring states have more options in contesting involuntary annexations.

If you are experiencing what you consider to be an unfair annexation, help may be available. The Good Neighbors Association is a non-profit association of property owners concerned and involved with involuntary annexation, condemnation, and other property rights issues. They are experienced in researching and challenging questionable annexations and may be able to assist you. For information, contact Cindy Akins at (910) 472-3544. Good Neighbors Association, PO Box 415, Thomasville, NC 27361.

An infusion to local economies

Electric cooperatives provide more than energy to their members. They also provide an economic boost to the communities they serve.

Cooperatives in North Carolina at present pay more than $45 million in taxes each year — property, sales, franchise and other taxes— mostly to local communities. Because they are not-for-profit businesses, electric cooperatives do not pay federal income taxes.

As owners of cooperatives, consumer-members also realize individual financial benefits by way of refunds. After establishing adequate financial reserves, cooperatives return excess revenues, called capital credits, to their consumer-members. In 1996 alone, North Carolina co-ops gave members a total of $11 million in capital credits.

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20	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
21	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
22	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
23	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
24	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
25	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
26	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
27	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
28	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
29	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
30	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
31	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
32	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
33	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
34	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
35	8.34	8.34	12.50	12.50	25.00	25.00	45.84	45.84
36	8.38	8.34	12.59	12.50	25.21	25.00	46.25	45.84
37	8.42	8.34	12.67	12.50	25.42	25.00	46.67	45.84
38	8.46	8.34	12.75	12.50	25.63	25.00	47.09	45.84
39	8.50	8.34	12.84	12.50	25.84	25.00	47.50	45.84
40	8.55	8.38	12.92	12.59	26.05	25.21	47.92	46.25
41	8.59	8.42	13.00	12.67	26.25	25.42	48.34	46.67
42	8.65	8.46	13.09	12.75	26.46	25.63	48.75	47.08
43	8.67	8.50	13.17	12.84	26.67	25.84	49.17	47.50

MONTHLY RATES

Issue Age	$50,000 Male	$50,000 Female	$100,000 Male	$100,000 Female	$250,000 Male	$250,000 Female	$500,000 Male	$500,000 Female
44	8.71	8.55	13.25	12.92	26.88	26.05	49.59	47.92
45	8.75	8.59	13.34	13.00	27.09	26.25	50.00	48.34
46	8.96	8.65	13.75	13.09	28.13	26.46	52.09	48.75
47	9.38	8.67	14.59	13.17	30.21	26.67	56.25	49.17
48	9.80	8.71	15.42	13.25	32.30	26.88	60.42	49.59
49	10.21	8.75	16.25	13.34	34.38	27.09	64.59	50.00
50	10.63	8.96	17.09	13.75	36.46	28.13	68.75	52.09
51	11.05	9.38	17.92	14.59	38.55	30.21	72.92	56.25
52	11.46	9.80	18.75	15.42	40.63	32.30	77.09	60.42
53	12.09	10.21	20.00	16.25	43.75	34.38	83.34	64.59
54	12.71	10.63	21.25	17.09	46.88	36.46	89.59	68.75
55	13.55	11.05	22.92	17.92	51.05	38.55	97.92	72.92
56	14.38	11.46	24.59	18.75	55.21	40.63	106.25	77.09
57	15.21	12.09	26.25	20.00	59.38	43.75	114.59	83.34
58	16.05	12.71	27.92	21.25	63.55	46.88	122.92	89.59
59	17.09	13.55	30.00	22.92	68.75	51.05	133.34	97.92
60	22.09	14.38	40.00	24.59	93.75	55.21	183.34	106.25
61	23.13	15.21	42.09	26.25	98.96	59.38	193.75	114.59
62	24.17	16.05	44.17	27.92	104.17	63.55	204.17	122.92
63	25.42	17.09	46.67	30.00	110.42	68.75	216.67	133.34
64	26.67	22.09	49.17	40.00	116.67	93.75	229.17	183.34
65	28.13	23.13	52.09	42.09	123.96	98.96	243.75	193.75
66-75	RATES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST							

Other amounts available upon request. Premiums are based on applicant's age at issuance of policy. Policies are non-cancellable as long as premiums are paid. Premiums may be paid annually, semi-annually and monthly bank draft only. (A no-cost medical exam may be required depending on age, health or amount of coverage desired). Policies above are annual renewable and convertible term. Policy Form No. L-ORD-5101-91. Level Death Benefit to age 85. Premiums increase annually. Underwritten by United Services Life Insurance Company, Arlington, VA 22203. Established in 1937. Over $21 Billion of Life Insurance in Force as of 12/31/95. Death Benefit payable for Natural or Accidental Death. NOT AVAILABLE IN ALL STATES.

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Memories of Christmas

The Way It Was Down East

"The Mailboat" is a collection of coastal Carolina memories that has been published quarterly from Harkers Island since 1990. As a collective project among writers, folklorists, artists and plain old storytellers, its production is always a labor of love. Like the mailboats that once carried a whole lot more than just mail to the coastal island communities, this publication is eagerly anticipated by its readers, and it arrives when it can. "Don't ever give up on The Mailboat," its publishers say. "It will make it. It will get there eventually." The fourth issue of the year traditionally is a collection of holiday season memories. Here are two, reprinted with permission of the publisher.

For information about subscriptions and back issues, contact The Mailboat, P.O. Box 3, Harkers Island, NC 28531. Phone: (919) 728-1500.

How the "West'ard" was one

By Kerry W. Willis

Soon after the autumn winds blew in on Harkers Island, The Sears and Roebuck Holiday Wish Books landed at the post office. Every day after school I would dash from ole' Bus 40 and crash into the kitchen hoping to find the Christmas Book on the counter. Just when I was sure the celebration had been canceled, the cherished book would mysteriously appear.

All of the neighborhood boys from the west end of the island (the "West'ard") would gather at the home of the lucky one who got his Wish Book first. In about an hour, the pages were dog-eared and our Christmas lists were done.

I remember the year that we all asked for National Football League uniforms. Most of us chose a 49'ers suit, because Craig Paylor did. His brother, Jeffrey, in what was healthy sibling rivalry, bucked the system and selected the Green Bay Packers.

Rodney Yeomans became a Chicago Bear, while his brother Terry surprised all of us by asking for a Shetland pony – a real one. (Terry always was Miss Emma Lee's most unpredictable grandson.)

On Christmas Day, William Piner, Billy Rose and John Fulford had the nerve to enter our neighborhood sporting Los Angeles Rams attire. With the clash of pads and helmets, you'd have thought the Super Bowl was underway in Loontown. I'm not sure who won, but I haven't cared a lick for the Rams since.

After the game, we went up to see Terry ride his pony around in circles. I can still see his dad, Phil, grinning from ear to ear. Of course, we wore our uniforms the rest of the day, partly because it was Christmas, but mostly because Craig wore his.

The boys in our neighborhood were united. I'm sure we were more "together" than any NFL club. Yes, we were made up of 49'ers, a Bear, and a few visiting Rams, but we were very close, especially during the holidays.

Whenever we see the Green Bay Packers on TV, we mourn for the most popular player to wear the green and yellow in our presence, Jeffrey Kent Paylor. And every time we see a blue and gold Rams helmet, we grieve for Billy Rose, who also left this life much too soon.

The memories of our two missing Hall of Fame players, Billy and Jeff, continue to warm our chilled hearts every Christmas. We'll always remember "How the West'ard was ONE!"

Happy holidays, God bless you, and I'm sure Craig would want me to say, "Go 49'ers!"

Kerry Willis lives in Harrisonburg, Va.

Santa had a good arm anyway

By Georgia Guthrie Dickinson

My daddy was a brick mason, and he built a fancy brick frame around a big black cast iron wash pot with a five-foot chimney up the back to take the smoke away from the laundress (my mother). When Christmas rolled around, no family in the neighborhood owned a pot large enough to hold a big ham. So Daddy cleaned the wash pot real good, filled it with clean water and built a nice fire under it. Four or five families brought their hams over to go into the pot along with ours, and they were all cooked together. Grandmama (who was born on the Ca'e Banks) often made soap in the same pot, and it was also used to make hominy and to cure yaupon leaves.

Most houses were pretty small and crammed with several generations of relatives. So, where did they put all of the cakes and pies that the women baked ahead for Christmas? Why, on a wide board shelf that was hung from the ceiling in the kitchen. The tantalizing aroma from all the goodies drifted down onto the tops of our heads.

Daddy always went over to Bogue Banks to get our tree, and he brought it back in his sail-skiff. Our winds being what they are, every tree was bent and twisted, and Mother would cut out a too-big branch here and tack it into a bare spot there.

Every year, just before Christmas, the fire truck would cruise the town, up one street and down the next with Santa riding up front. He would throw out oranges to the children who heard the fire truck coming and came running out to meet it. For several years our long-time mailman, Duffy Guthrie, was the Santa, mainly because he was active in the fire department but also because he had ample girth and needed no extra padding to fill out the suit. Duffy was left-handed and he would reach back with his right hand to pick up an orange, toss it over into his left hand, then throw it out to the crowd. One year his young daughter, Vieta, was watching from the side of the street with her mother, excited by all of the commotion. Suddenly, she turned to her mother and said, "Look Mama! Santa Claus throws oranges just like Daddy throws a ball."

For years, Bobby Hudgins was Beaufort's Santa and for the same reasons. He was a member of their fire department and he also had plenty of natural padding. One year they were delivering boxes of food and toys to needy families. Bobby was in his glory as Santa, and he was "Ho! Ho! Ho-ing" all over the place. At one house he called out, "Ho! Ho! Ho! Open the door for Santa," as he stepped onto the porch. Suddenly a rotten board gave way under his foot and his leg went through it up to his knee. Not to be deterred from his holiday spirits, Bobby then cried out with tears in his voice, "Ho! Ho! Ho! Santa Claus just broke his dag-goned laig." And he had.

Georgia Guthrie Dickinson lives in Newport.

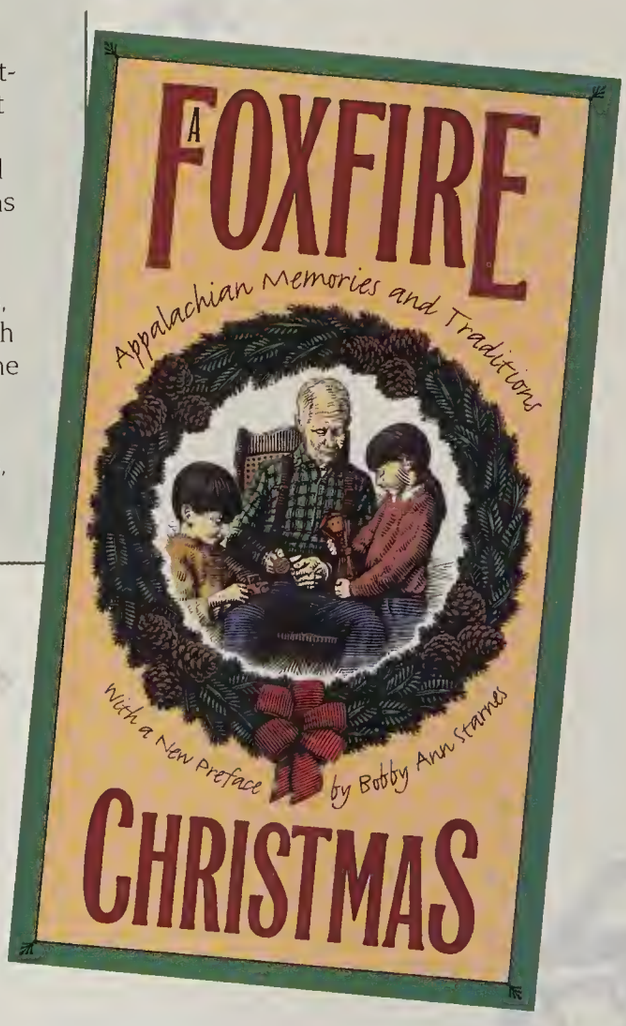
In the Country

Christmas in the Mountains 70 Years Ago

Minyard and Lessie Conner left their home in western North Carolina in 1935 to make way for the Smoky Mountains National Park. They moved just across the state line to Rabun County, Ga.

They were interviewed in 1985 by Joseph Fowler and Kelly Shropshire, students at Rabun County High School who participated in the acclaimed Foxfire oral history program that originated at the school. The student interviewers said that as the couple recalled younger days, "Minyard laughed his low, deep bellow and Lessie smiled quietly." The Conners' recollections about Christmas in the Smoky Mountains 70 years ago appeared in the 1989 book, "A Foxfire Christmas: Appalachian Memories and Traditions." The book, including more than two dozen traditional seasonal recipes, was re-issued with a new preface in 1996 by the University of North Carolina Press. The excerpt here is reprinted with permission of the publisher. ©1989 The Foxfire Fund. All rights reserved.

The book is available in bookstores for $12.95 (softcover, 144 pages) or from the publisher at University of North Carolina Press, P.O. Box 2288, Chapel Hill, NC 27515. Phone: (800) 848-6224.



Candy and oranges, guns and gags

Minyard Conner: Mother knit our stockings from wool. We had lots of sheep and grew our own wool. It was just one of our regular stockings that we used for Christmas for Santa Claus. Sometimes we'd get candy and apples and an orange. The first orange I'd ever see'd was in my sock. I didn't know what they was. I liked it. I've liked oranges ever since.

My parents told me about old Santa Claus coming down the chimney and we had a big old chimney. Said he come down and delivered our presents into our stockings. I never did see his tracks, you know, where he had left any sign, and when I was about five or six years old, I was beginning to doubt Santa. One morning when I got up – Christmas morning – I found a gun in my stocking, one of those little old cap busters. I got that gun outta that stocking. It was the first one I'd ever seen, and the caps were just loose in a little box. I shot all the caps up that were in the stocking, and I got to wondering where I could get some more. We lived in a two-story house, and there was rooms upstairs, and I remembered seeing some of those caps on the steps. It looked like instead of Santa Claus coming down the chimney; he came down the stairs. I just tracked him back on up there to one of the upstairs rooms where they'd dropped some of them there caps. Right then, I was beginning to doubt old Santa Claus. I knowed he didn't come down the chimney.

Minyard Conner

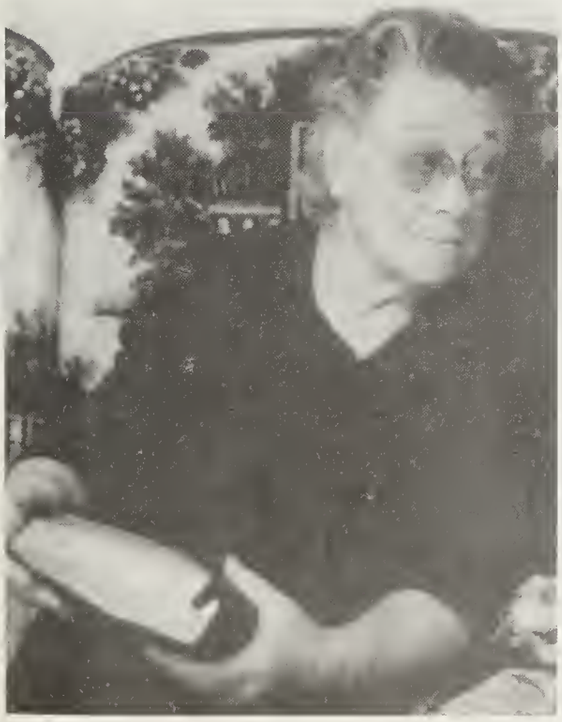
I remember my daddy givin' me a sixteen-gauge shotgun at Christmastime – the first real gun I ever had in my life. He wouldn't give it to me until I was big enough to shoot it and take care of it and wasn't afraid of it. He said, "I believe, son, you're gettin' nearly big enough to shoot that shotgun." Said, "Will you shoot it?"

I said, "Believe I will."

Across the road, there was an apple tree over there, and somebody had threw a cornstalk up in that tree. He said, "Shoot at that there cornstalk. If you can hit that cornstalk, you can kill a squirrel. BA-ROOM-AH! Way back yonder!" It kicked me pretty bad. He said, "I believe you can shoot it now."

Boys! I went to killing squirrels with that ol' shotgun. I was proud of that! He gave me the shotgun and a box of shells, and we had squirrels to eat!

Sometimes we'd get presents at school. Somebody'd give you something, so you wanted to give them something. We gave mostly homemade candy made out of syrup. We didn't have nothing else. We'd have what they called a candy pulling – the girls and boys would. We'd get us a girl and pull candy. The more we worked it, the better it'd be. Made it harder and stiffer. I remember boiling the syrup down, and it'd turn white as we pulled on it.



Lessie Conner

Lessie Conner: We have gotten gag gifts at the Christmas tree drawings sometimes. Minyard got a sandwich made out of a hog's nose. When they killed a hog to slaughter, they cut the old snout off and put it in between two pieces of light bread and tied it with sea grass. They did! Had it all wrapped up and in a pretty box, and he opened it and there was that old hog snout!

The first Christmas tree I ever seen was at our church. I must have been about thirteen or fourteen years old. We didn't have no ornaments or lights. We didn't have electricity. They drawed names for presents, and we all got presents. They was just wrapped in plain white wrapping paper and placed under the tree. We'd save the paper that things bought at the store was wrapped in and use that. Most of the presents was all homemade. They'd give a towel, or make somebody an apron or a set of pillowcases.

My mother knit my stockings out of wool, and these were the ones we hung up for Santa Claus. My stocking was longer than the boys'. We'd get apples, and there'd always be hard candy and sometimes we'd get chocolate candy. And we'd get these little bitty red cinnamon drops that'd burn your mouth, and long sticks of chewing gum wrapped in white paper. It wasn't in a pack. That's how it was with the first Christmases I remember. We didn't get toys until after we got bigger. I got a bought doll for Christmas when I was about ten years old, and I thought it was the prettiest thing I'd ever seen. It had real hair, and it'd open its eyes and was so beautiful! It was sticking in the top of my sock. Santa Claus brought it. That doll was it! I kept it for years and years.

The homegrown angel

By Lorraine Johnson-Coleman

You know, I wonder if folks can't become just a little sophisticated and a whole lot stupid at the same time? It seemed like to me the understandin' was the easiest when the livin' was the hardest. When I was little, welfare was sharin' with your hungry neighbors; medicaid was givin' the doctor or whoever else came by, a ham for fixin' you up. We ain't had no adoption agencies neither; we took care of our own. If you couldn't take care of one of yours, then you could send that chile on down the road apiece to somebody who would roll out an extra coverin' and set down one more plate. That chile could stay put 'til you came back for 'em. I hear that the Africans say it takes a whole village to raise a chile. Though we used to believe that, and my parents sure 'nough lived by it, today's folks clearly done forgot it.

The Homefolk. Even though some of ya'll done moved away, I know you can still remember us. We them other ones, not the bound-by-blood folks, but them other loved ones, the way down yonder, back 'round the way, sure 'nough salt of the earth, home grown kind of people! It didn't matter what ya'll had, we was included too, and that meant everything – from laughter to the cryin', the livin' and lovin' betwix and between.

Back then your neighbor was 'bout regular as pig tracks and I mean you could trust 'em, really trust 'em with your life if you had to, and many times we had to. I remember one neighbor in particular, Sister Minnie, the schoolteacher. She lived a good stone's throw away, up the road apiece. Times come where we ain't seen her for weeks, but somehow she was always there when we needed her. One time my mama got so sick that she couldn't tend to me or any of them other eight younguns. Papa was 'bout wore out from workin' the fields from sun up to sun down, and it was all he could do to keep workin' enough so we wouldn't all starve. Things was pretty lean back then. Well, it seemed like it all landed on me, the oldest, with a great big thud, and it coulda took me out or at least knocked me down, but I didn't dare let it. I just couldn't let it. Anyway, 'cause of all this, I had to stay away from school for awhile, somethin' that really hurt Mama 'cause she believed in us getting' all the book learnin' we could.

Well, we tried mighty hard to keep this misery bottled up real tight so none of the sadness would leak out. We was proud folks and didn't want no whole lot of people in our business, but we learned better. See that's the thing about Homefolk – you ain't got no business that ain't they business. Well, word must of leaked out to Miz Minnie somehow or 'nother 'cause she showed up one day with a big steamin' pot of collards, seasoned with

Worser Days and Better Times

The excerpt here is from "Just Plain Folks" by Lorraine Johnson-Coleman, published 1997 by Summerhouse Press, Columbia, S.C.

Lorraine Johnson-Coleman was raised in New York City and recently moved to Greenville, N.C., not far from her ancestral home in Farmville. She is a nationally recognized writer and storyteller, but is also an accomplished preservationist, especially of African-American folk culture. Her African-American Heritage Preservation and Cultural Arts Initiative, currently at work in five eastern North Carolina counties, has been recognized as a national model for rural tourism development. It aims to raise participation in regional culture and heritage among African-American communities and their economies.

Lorraine says her new book is about "the extraordinary lives of some ordinary folks" and "an appreciation for the words, wit and wisdom from yesterday that can help make sense of a chaotic today."

She lives in Greenville with her husband, Lance Coleman, and their four children. She can be reached at Expressions by Lorraine, 111 Tanglewood Dr., Greenville, NC 27858. Phone: (919) 752-9128.

The book (hardcover, 165 pages) is available in bookstores. To mail order an autographed first edition copy ($24.95), call the toll-free number (888) 552-8253.

a generous helping' of neckbones. She took a quiet look-see to check on Mama and then grabbed a broom and started sweepin'. In no time flat she had everything all put back together – we were all fed, the place was clean and the dishes washed and put away. Even the pots was scrubbed and dried and hangin' on the nails they each called home. I coulda cried I was so happy.

Later that evening' after she got them other eight to bed, she hugged me real close and whispered in my ear, "sometimes if you just ask him, the Lord will send you somebody to step in for the family that can't make it on 'round – somebody just to help you hold your chin up and to shoulder a mighty big load. Just don't forget to say thank you to 'em, ya hear." Just like she came, she was gone. I ain't never gonna forget her or all them others that stepped in for kin helping to shoulder them awful heavy loads. And not one day of my life have I ever forgot to thank Him who sent 'em. So I'll leave with a simple "Thank you Lord for the Homefolk, and if you could manage to wrassle up a few of them disappearin' homegrown angels, send 'em on back this way again. We could sure enough use 'em. Amen."

Lorraine Johnson-Coleman

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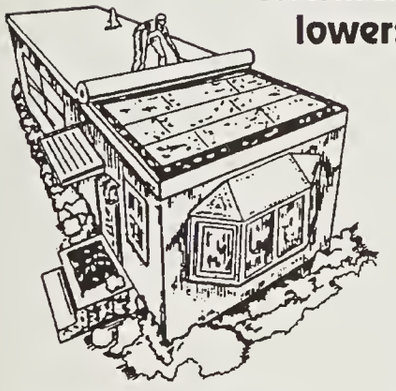

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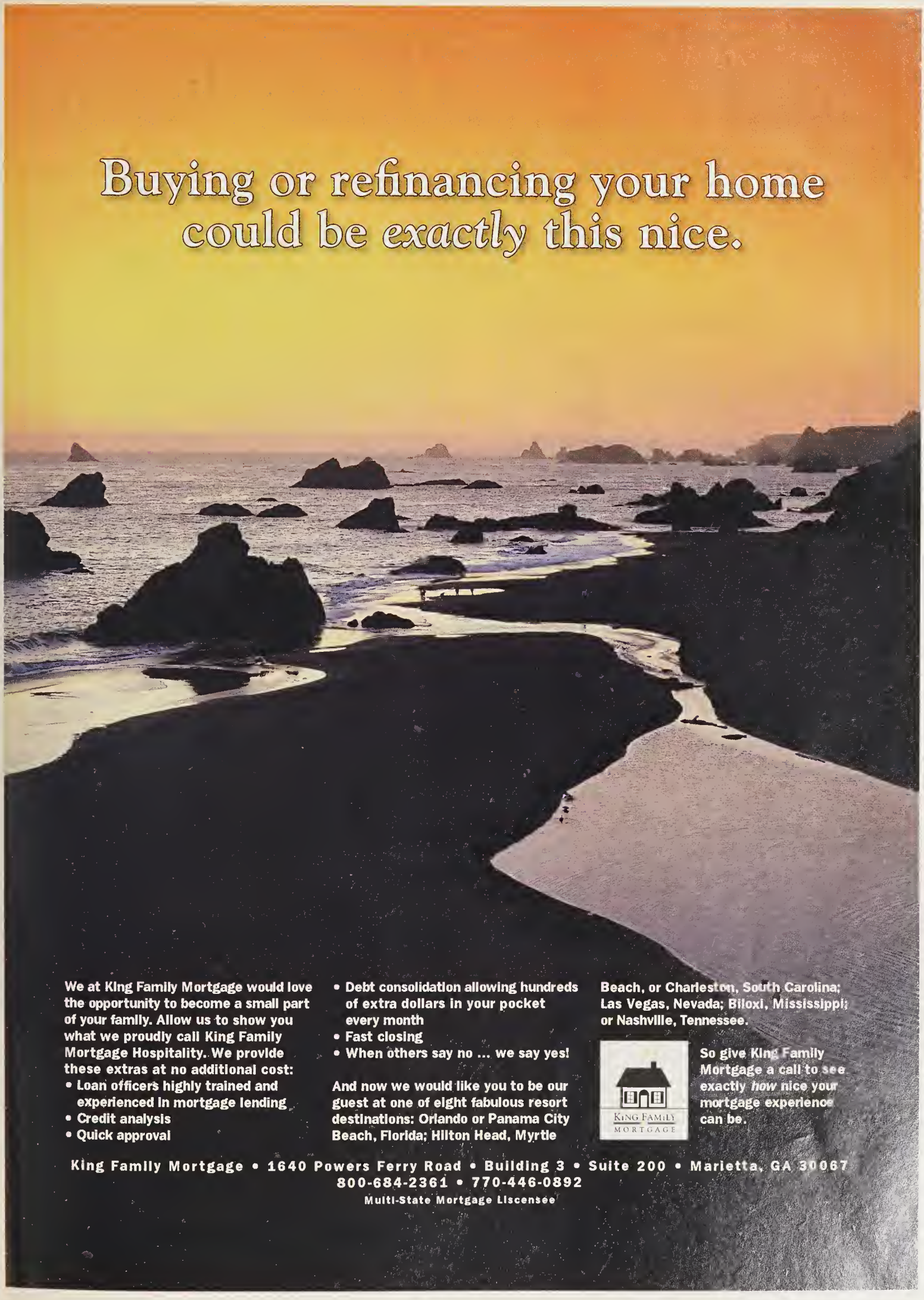
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Chef Bob Passorelli is the former executive chef in the Governor's Mansion.

Pecan Pie

3 eggs
1 cup light karo syrup
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup butter
1 teaspoon vanilla
Pinch of salt
1 to 1 ½ cups pecans
1 9-or10-inch pie shell, unbaked

Beat eggs, melt butter. Combine ingredients except pecans. Mix well and pour into a 9-or 10-inch unbaked pie shell. Top with pecans. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes or until firm in center.

Turkey Parmesan

1 ½ pounds turkey tenderloin sliced into scallops
2 eggs
1/4 cup milk
1 cup seasoned flour (1 cup flour, 1 tablespoon salt, 1 teaspoon pepper)
2 cups dried breadcrumbs
1 ½ cups your favorite marinara sauce
½ - 1 cup olive oil for sautéing
3/4 pound sliced mozzarella cheese
Parsley
Parmesan cheese

Slice tenderloins into a ¼-inch thick "scallops". Butterfly each "scallop" and pound thin (⅜-inch) using a mallet. Dip each piece into flour, then egg mixture (2 eggs, ¼ cup milk), then into breadcrumbs. Press crumbs into tenderloin "scallops".

Heat olive oil until it is medium hot. Try to avoid smoking the oil. Turn heat to high and sauté "scallops" of turkey. When well browned (modulate heat as necessary), place in oven-proof casserole dish, ladle sauce down middle and top with the mozzarella and Parmesan cheese.

Bake at 350 degrees for 10-15 minutes or broil until cheese melts, bubbles and browns. Serve with spaghetti, sauce, steamed broccoli and tossed salad. Serves 4-6 people.

Sweet Potato and Wild Mushroom Ravioli

Pasta Dough

1 ½ cups flour
1 ½ cups semolina flour
2 teaspoons salt
3 egg whites and 1 yolk
¾ cup cooked mashed sweet potatoes
1 teaspoon cumin
¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Put all ingredients into a food processor. Knead into a ball, then process for 60 seconds. Wrap in plastic and refrigerate for 2 hours.

Wild Mushroom filling

6-8 ounces assorted mushrooms
2 shallots, minced
½ cup heavy cream
2 tablespoons butter
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tablespoon sherry
½ teaspoon tarragon
Pinch of salt
Fresh ground black pepper

Wash mushrooms well. Dice mushrooms and sauté in butter with garlic and shallots. Add other ingredients and cook down until almost dry. Cool.

Sauce

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
Grated zest of one lemon
2 cloves garlic
4 ounces butter
2 tablespoons capers
1 tablespoon chopped fresh herbs (basil, tarragon, thyme, etc.)
Combine all ingredients in saucepan, heat to simmer.

Dish

Cut the chilled dough ball into two pieces. Roll out each piece to ⅛ inch thick on well-floured surface or use a pasta machine to roll into two long sheets of dough. Place one teaspoon mounds of the mushroom mixture about 2 inches apart. Brush between mounds with water. Place other strip of dough on top and press down to push out any air trapped between dough layers. Cut ravioli using a fluted pastry wheel. Do not stack these before cooking because they may stick together. Cook ravioli about 5 minutes in boiling salted water. Toss with caper butter sauce or your favorite sauce. Sprinkle with chopped parsley and serve.

Executive Mansion Marinade for Flank Steak

1 tablespoon tomato paste
3 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon olive oil
½ teaspoon coarse ground black pepper
⅛ teaspoon oregano leaf
1 clove garlic

Combine all ingredients in food processor and puree until smooth. Spread on both sides of flank steak and allow to marinate overnight in the refrigerator for two to three hours.

Chef Bob Passorelli is the former executive chef in the Governor's Mansion.

Fiona Ritchie and her Celtic country music show

by Heather Dune Macadam

Fiona Ritchie is the voice of Celtic music in America, and what a voice. She comes across National Public Radio airwaves each week with her music program, "The Thistle and Shamrock®," that has originated from WFAE-FM in Charlotte since 1981. Her show brings in more listeners than any music program airing on NPR.

It's been said that listeners would tune in to hear her read IRS forms, but that belittles the richness and variety of the music she brings into our homes and cars every week. Americans are too astute in their musical tastes to be conned by her lovely brogue alone. It is more likely the common thread between Celtic music and many other musical forms that brings thousands of loyal followers from around the world to her show.

This year has been an exceptional one for Fiona, a part-time resident of Charlotte. She was awarded the silver world medal at the 1997 International Radio Festival for her narration of "A Celtic Tale: The Legend of Deirdre," and has seen her radio show expand to include Europe and Japan. One might think Fiona has become a jetsetter extraordinaire. "That's horribly pretentious!" she laughs. "Just give me few books and wake me up when we get there."

So with all of this international recognition, are the Celts taking over the world's airwaves? In conversation with Fiona from Charlotte, we spoke about the impact Celtic music is having on our culture, why it's so popular, and what the American South means to her in terms of home and heritage.

Connecting Scotland and North Carolina

It almost sounds too poetic to say that Fiona Ritchie was born in a small shipping town overlooking the River Clyde facing the hills of Argyle where Scotland's Highlands begin. But it's true. And it was in this beautiful countryside that Fiona began her love affair with music. "I grew up in a real radio household; it was always on and we listened to everything. My parents were great music appreciators." From such beginnings one might think that conceiving a show that featured Celtic music was divined by the Druid Cathbad himself, but it was more likely a divined accident.

As part of her education, Fiona arranged to come to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. "I didn't know anything about this part of the world, but there's a real connection between Scotland and North Carolina." She found the nexus continually reinforced by the music she heard. "Going up into the mountains, you connect with something that feels quite unspoiled, like Scotland. Uncovering the subtle similarities between a place and its people is always something I've enjoyed. For a lot of Americans, there's an air of familiarity about Celtic music because it's fed into so much of the music over here: Appalachian, early country. But I also think it has a universal appeal."

Fiona heard public radio for the first time on the then newly founded station WFAE, where she worked as a volunteer. One day the director of the station said, "Fiona why don't you do a

I didn't know anything about this part of the world, but there's a real connection between Scotland and North Carolina. Going up into the mountains, you connect with something that feels quite unspoiled, like Scotland.

Gordon Thomson

program of that music from whereever it is you're from?" That's how it started.

"I wanted to contribute something to this great station," Fiona remembers. "The program took on a life of its own though and has dragged me along with it!"

What is it that impacts her listeners so intensely? Is the music itself a cultural root for those who tune in? In fact, there are a number of listeners who say they don't have a drop of Celtic blood in their bodies, but they love the music. "You have to believe that there are qualities in the music which transcend heredity," Fiona says. "It touches people in a universal way. I have to put that down to the quality of the music—it's really from the people. There's a real tradition of making music and the joy of making music in Ireland and Scotland, which also exists in the United States. Maybe people just connect with the raw spirit of it!"

Fiona speaks of minstrelsy with awe and reverence. "You listen to the works of Enya, and clearly that's a product of present day technology. But the core of what she does is from that simple spirit of the pipes, the harp. Perhaps people's interest in Celtic music is a reaction to this computerized, digitized age. We have an appetite nowadays for acoustic tones and want to hear music that sounds like it comes from somewhere on earth."

On one show, Fiona introduces a French-Canadian melody that has an a cappella back-up section straight out of 1950's bee-bop doo-op, only the French-Canadian music is far older than our rock-n-roll. "It's not only the people that emigrated from the British Isles but those with the roots of African and Native American who can find Celtic traditions in their dance and music." It is, to paraphrase the old bluegrass tune, a circle unbroken by race or time.

Having made her home in two countries, crossing cultures has been a vital part of Fiona's life. "Home means more to me than the one place that you stay. It's a place I have a deep connection with, and so the South is part of my sense of home. I've lived here for ten years and my business is still based here. So, even though I live in Scotland, I've never, in my mind or heart, really left this place."

"It's nice to have a sense of home that is broad enough to carry around with you in your heart." And that is where she touches us. "Music has a life of its own. And Celtic music has an emotional effect on people because it comes from the heart to the heart. . . .

It's very humbling when people write in to say the show's gotten them through a difficult time."

Driving back to North Carolina on a Sunday afternoon after buying lottery tickets and shopping for antiques in Virginia, I turn on the radio to ease the last leg of our journey. There's a delightful, light-hearted Irish jig playing, but since it's not the regular time for "The Thistle and Shamrock," I wonder what show we've found. Minutes later, Fiona's familiar voice skips across the airwaves from a Charlottesville station.

So we relax and enjoy the ride. The traffic no longer matters. We have Celtic music to carry us home.

You can subscribe to "The Thistle & Shamrock Newsletter" (bimonthly) and playlist service. Send your check for $20 to:
The Thistle & Shamrock
PO Box 560646
Charlotte, NC 28256-0646

The show's website is at:
www.npr.org/programs/thistle

Where to tune it in

The following National Public Radio affiliates in North Carolina carry "The Thistle and Shamrock"

Asheville, WCQS (88.1),
Saturday, 12:30 p.m.

Chapel Hill, WUNC (91.5),
Sunday, 6 p.m.

Charlotte, WFAE (90.7),
Saturday, 8 p.m.

Franklin, WFQS (91.3),
Saturday, 12:30 p.m.

Hickory, WFHE (90.3),
Saturday, 8 p.m.

Spindale, WNCW (88.7),
Sunday, 12noon

Wilmington, WHQR (91.3),
Friday, 7 p.m.

Winston-Salem, WFDD (88.5),
Saturday, 1 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Heather Dune Macadam is a second-generation Scot and co-author of the book "Rena's Promise: A Story of Sisters in Auschwitz," published by Beacon Press, 1995. She lives in Winston-Salem.

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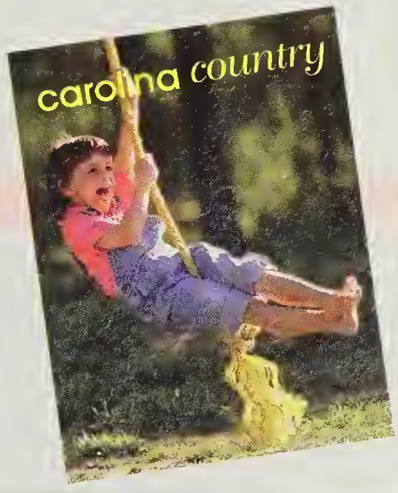

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Carolina Close-up

compiled by Laura Maynard

Let's talk turkey

Jean Hart of New Bern won first place and $800 in prize money celebrating North Carolina's largest commodity — turkey. Her Turkey-Basil Piccata edged out four other finalists at the 1997 North Carolina Turkey Cooking Contest in September. The recipes feature all North Carolina turkey products and emphasize the convenience and versatility of turkey parts.

Jean Hart and her "Turkey-Basil Piccata."

Other finalists included Linda Vogler of Charlotte, Gloria M.DeBarth of Ocracoke, Diane Probst of Denver and Velma B.Altman of Fayetteville.

The contest kicked off the 13th annual North Carolina Turkey Festival sponsored in Raeford by the N.C. Turkey Federation, N.C. Department of Agriculture and N.C. State University. The festival also included music, art, sports and children's entertainment. It began in 1984 as a one-day "arts in the park" and has grown over the years into a three-day event.

North Carolina has been the nation's leading turkey producing state since 1981. The industry employs over 26,000 people (directly and indirectly), and the state's farms are valued at more than $582 million.

The winning recipes are published in brochure available from the N.C. Poultry Federation, 4020 Barrett Dr., Suite 102, Raleigh, NC 27609.

Entries for the 1998 contest may be sent to the same address by May 1, 1998.

Turkey-Basil Piccata

Jean Hart New Bern, NC

⅓ cup all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon pepper
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 package (1 pound) turkey cutlets
4 cloves garlic, minced
1½ teaspoons dried or 1½tablespoons chopped fresh basil
½ cup dry white wine
1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 lemon, sliced

Over medium-high heat in a large skillet, heat oil. Combine flour, salt and pepper in a shallow dish. Dredge cutlets in flour mixture, shaking off excess. Add cutlets and cook 1 ½ minutes or until done, turning twice. Remove cutlets from skillet. Add garlic and basil to loosen particles from bottom of skillet. Add wine, lemon juice and lemon slices. Cook, stirring constantly for 45 seconds. Return cutlets to skillet and cook until thoroughly heated. Serve immediately. Garnish with fresh basil. Serves four.

Venetian masterpiece on loan to Museum of Art

Giambattista Tiepolo's work, "The Adoration of the Christ Child," is on loan to the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh through the holidays from St. Mark's basilica in Venice. Tiepolo is an 18th century Italian painter known for his remarkable use of light and color. The painting is one of his earliest works, originally painted for the Venician church of San Giuliano and unveiled to the public at Christmas.

Pearson Falls is a natural wonder

Naturalists seeking a peaceful retreat should look up Pearson Falls in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Polk County. The area was named for Charles William Pearson, who noticed it while looking for a passage for what was to be the Southern Railroad. During his lifetime, he welcomed visitors to enjoy its array of plants and wildlife. After his death in 1931, the Tryon Garden Club purchased the property and preserved its beauty for the public.

The Pearson Falls wildlife preserve includes several hundred acres and its Garden House is currently used as part of the Botanical Department of the University of North Carolina-Asheville. Over 25,000 people visit the site each year.

Admission is $2 for adults, 50 cents for children ages 6-12 and free for children under 6. For more information contact Polk County Travel & Tourism at 1-800-440-7848.

N.C. Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill

The "Graveyard of the Atlantic" video documentary includes archival photography such as this scene near Salvo on the Outer Banks. It shows an auction (background) and Hatterasmen with wreckage from the 643-ton cargo ship "Priscilla," which was destroyed in the August 17, 1899 hurricane named San Ciriaco. Rasmus Midgett of the Gull Shoal Life-Saving Station single-handedly rescued 10 crew from the ship.

Shipwrecks, mysteries and rescues appear in a new video by North Carolina producers

A new, two-part video documentary, "The Graveyard of the Atlantic – 400 Years of Shipwrecks, Mysteries and Heroic Rescues," portrays the travails of one of the most dangerous ocean passages in the world and how it shaped 400 years of history on North Carolina's Outer Banks. The 182-mile stretch of shoreline from Currituck Beach to Cape Lookout has produced over 1,000 documented shipwrecks, one of the greatest densities of vessels lost in the world.

Part I of the video series explores the Golden Age of Sail and Steam and includes many of the hundreds of shipwrecks and lives lost in North Carolina ocean waters from the1500s to 1899. Hear about rescues of the crews of the "Ephraim Williams" in 1884 and the "Priscilla" during the devastating San Ciriaco hurricane of 1899. Learn how shipwrecks provided a way of life and often a means of survival for the residents of the barrier islands. Interviews with native Outer Bankers relate the excitement, intrigue and compassion caused by the shouts, "Ship ashore!"

Part II reviews the shipwrecks of the 20th century, from the unsolved mystery of the Ghost Ship of Diamond Shoals and the carnage wrought by German submarines during two world wars through dramatic U.S. Coast Guard rescues of the 1990s. Residents tell first- hand accounts of burning ships at sea and the strange and ironic stories of Jim Baugham Gaskill and the steamer "Kyzikes." Included is rare film footage of defenseless sailing ships–torpedoed and sinking under full sail, and Gen. Billy Mitchell's amazing 1923 demonstration of the lethal potential of air power.

Each part of "Graveyard of the Atlantic" runs approximately 45 minutes and may be purchased for $23.95 each, or $42.90 for two. Checks and money orders may be mailed to Graveyard of the Atlantic Video, P. O. Box 19665, Raleigh, NC 27619. Phone: (800) 647-3536.

The production is by Video Marketing Group, Inc. of Raleigh, past recipient of a Peabody Award for excellence in journalism. VMG also has published a collection of travel videos about North Carolina.

"North Carolina – A Video Travel Guide," is an hour-long guided tour of the state.

"Great Golf Courses – The Carolinas" takes viewers to 85 of the best places to play in North and South Carolina.

"North Carolina Bed & Breakfasts and Country Inns" visits 50 charming and unique accommodations.

"The Newcomer's Guide to the Triangle" features things to do in Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill and is also shown 24 hours a day in 6,000 hotel rooms in the area.

Other videos feature the mountains and the coast. Call (800) 647-3536 for information.

Day planner for nature and nature lovers

"Flora, a Book of Days," is a pocket-sized 1998 calendar showcasing southern plant life and designed by Ippy Patterson of Hillsborough. It has a forest floor theme and covers a week's appointments on each two-page spread. Ten percent of proceeds from the sale of the book will be donated to support the preservation of rare and endangered plants.

Ippy Patterson's illustrations are intricate sketches of southern vines, leaves and flowers accompanied by hand-lettered descriptions. As an old style cottage industry production, Patterson's entire calendar is hand made, with the exceptions of printing and binding.

"Flora, A Book of Days" is available at specialty stores and the Origins counter of Estee Lauder in department stores and elsewhere. Copies are $14.95. For more information contact Ippy Patterson, 3010 Arthur Minnis Rd., Hillsborough, NC 27278.

© by Charles Joyner

What is a *Merry Christmas* Worth?

There are 10 different letters in MERRY CHRISTMAS. We have given each one a different value from 0 through 9. In addition, we have made up a list of 10 words, using letters from MERRY CHRISTMAS, and have summed up the value of the letters in each word. For example, if T=0, H=1, I=2, and S=3, then THIS would equal 6 (0+1+2+3).

Your challenge is to find the value of MERRY CHRISTMAS. One way is to find the value of each letter and add them up.

HIM=6	HIS=7	HER=12	MIRTH=14	SHIRT=15
CASH=18	CRIME=23	CHAIR=24	REACH=27	MYSTERY=32

M e r r y *C h r i s t m a s*

___+___+___+___+___ ___+___+___+___+___+___+___+___+___+___

Joyner's Corner is offering a $25 prize to some lucky puzzler who mails us the correct answer to the brainteaser "What is a *Merry Christmas* Worth?" postmarked before December 25. Correct answers will be numbered as received and the winning entry picked at random by computer. The winner's name and puzzle answer will be published in the February issue of Carolina Country.

Mail your answer with your name and address to:
Carolina Country Puzzle
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

The Last Word

Can you complete the last word in this puzzle? Only one word is the right word — with good reason!

A	T	L	A	S
B	I	B	L	E
G	O	O	S	E
	H			H

Math Words

What's in a name? Each letter in the name SANTA CLAUS stands for a digit. Repeated letters represent repeated digits. If L=5, can you replace the missing digits in the multiplication problem?

S	A	N	T	A

X S

C	L	A	U	S
	5			

Answers on page 37

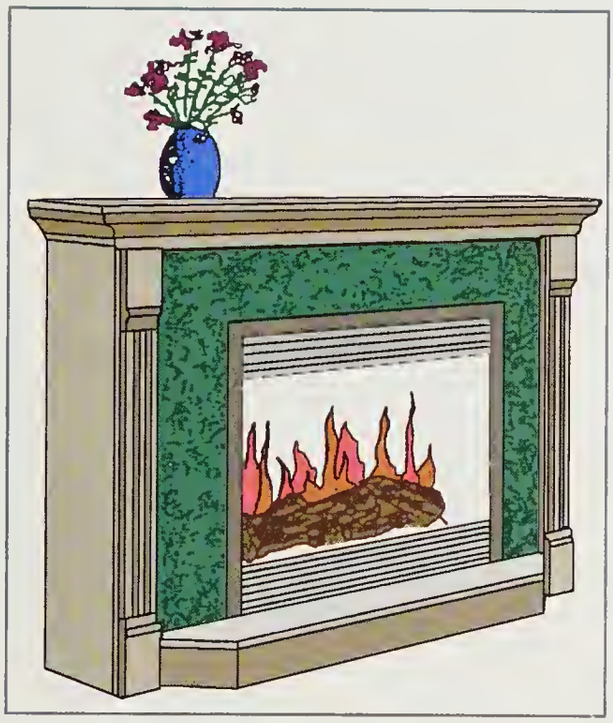
The answer to the "Merry Christmas" puzzle will appear in February's magazine.

Making Cents of Your Electric Bill

by James Dulley

Electric fireplaces are realistic, efficient & effective

By using new designs of high-tech electric logs, electric fireplace/heaters create realistic looking embers and flickering flames, as well as being efficient and effective heaters. Many are mounted in a finely finished wood, stone or cultured marble fireplace surround (some with 14-karat gold trim), and they become the focal point of any room. Corner units with built-in bookcases and shelves and models that hang on a wall are also available.



At a recent Remodelers Show in Kansas City, I had to look twice at one electric fireplace to determine if the logs and brilliant flames were really burning or not. During mild weather or in the summer, switch the heater portion off and relax by the flickering fire without driving up your air-conditioning cost. On some models, the electric logs and sound-making devices use only about 100 watts.

Many electric fireplaces, like models from Burley, have adjustable flames and brightness. By turning a dial on the fireplace controls, the flames can be changed from lazy and relaxing to a raging, dancing fire. Other models even have adjustable sound that simulates the crackling of real burning logs.

Unlike real wood-burning or gas fireplaces that often lose more heat than they produce, electric fireplaces are 100-percent efficient. Another efficiency advantage is that, since there is no flue and indoor air is not lost, no chilly indoor drafts are created. Your house stays cleaner with less allergens.

Select an electric fireplace with adjustable heat output, a built-in thermostat and adjustable blower speeds. The maximum heat output is usually about 1,500 watts. A low and high heat setting coupled with a thermostat provides adequate control over the heat output and room temperature.

Electric units are available two ways - complete fireplace/mantel assemblies or electric logs to fit an existing fireplace. Either way, you just slide them out of the box and plug them in for a raging fire in just a few minutes. Many of the complete freestanding fireplace assemblies are light enough to be carried easily from room to room.

Several different design methods are used to create the realistic flames in electric fireplaces and logs. One method uses a combination of several mirrors, a small fan, lights, long ribbons and a special "movie-type" screen in the back of the fireplace. The small quiet fan blows air through the ribbons making them dance over the red, amber and orange-colored lights behind the logs. These moving ribbons create a flickering flame image on the screen that appears to be coming off the logs. The intensity of the flames is controlled by adjusting the speed of the ribbon fan and the brightness of the colored lights.

Another realistic adjustable flame design technique uses a rotating silver foil disc. It rotates between colored lights and real wood logs for an authentic flame appearance. In addition to creating the flickering flame image, the rotating foil disc brushes against a special plastic piece to produce a crackling sound of logs burning.

When using the electric fireplace, you will realize the maximum savings on your electric bill if you set back your furnace thermostat too. The fireplace will keep that room comfortably warm. If you have a heat pump, install a true heat pump-type setback thermostat before adjusting the thermostat down and up. Without it, the big backup electric heating elements might kick on.

Another unique and decorative electric heater option is a new combination ceiling fan/ceramic element heater. The thermostat controlled heater element is built into the light fixture beneath the ceiling fan for excellent hot air distribution. There is a small fan inside the heater to force the heated air out. These can be purchased as complete ceiling fan/heater/light assemblies or just as heater/light kits to mount under any existing ceiling fan.

Write for Update No. 989 - a buyer's guide of electric fireplace and ceiling fan/heater kits listing fireplace styles, finishes, sizes, log designs, adjustable flames, heat outputs, features and prices. Please include $2 and a business-size self-addressed stamped envelope and mail to James Dulley, Carolina Country, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244.

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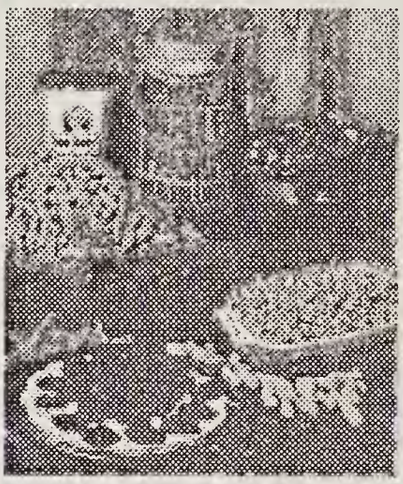
Aunt Ruby's PEANUTS



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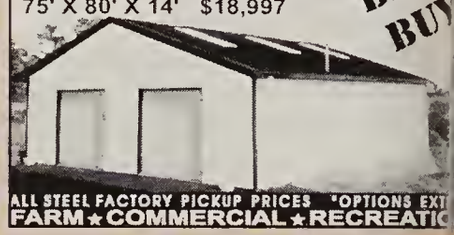

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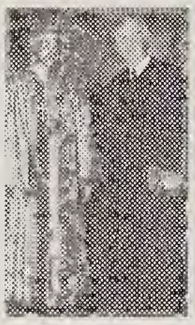

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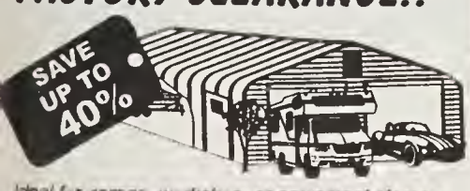

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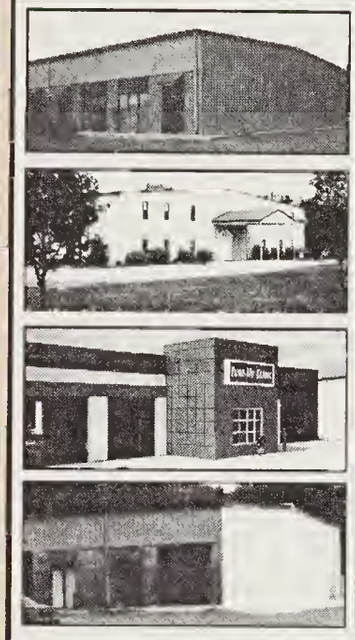

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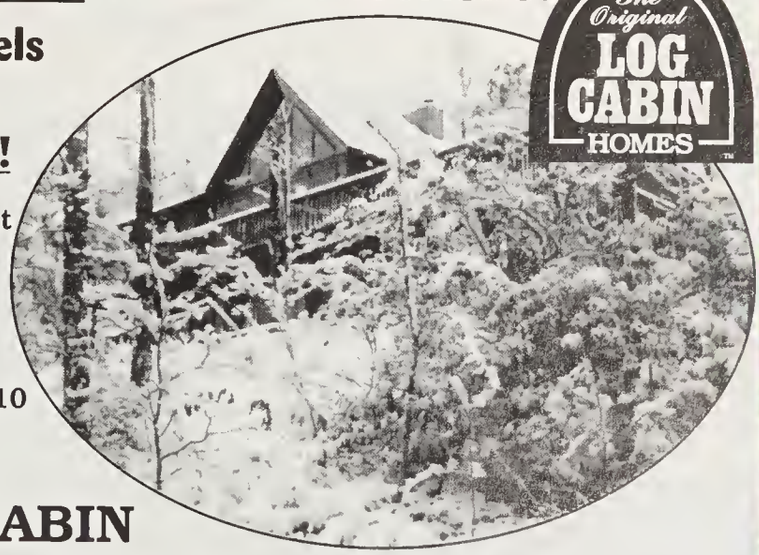

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Carolina Compass

compiled by Jason Dunn

Brass Quintet
Dec. 2, Warrensville
The Paramount Brass quintet performs classical and jazz selections. Blue Ridge Elementary School Auditorium. 7:30 p.m. (910) 246-ARTS.

Christmas Tree Festival
Dec. 3-15, Boone
An Appalachian-style Christmas. University Hall, Appalachian State University. $2. (704) 262-3117.

Festival of Trees & Lights
Dec. 4-7, Pinehurst
Features 35 decorated trees in a family-centered winter wonderland. Proceeds benefit Sandhills Children's Center. Pinehurst Hotel. (910) 692-3323.

Mount Airy Christmas
Dec. 4-14, Mount Airy
Christmas tree lighting, Dec. 4. "A Christmas Carol," Dec. 12-14. Tour of homes, Dec. 13-14. (910) 786-6116.

"Amahl and the Night Visitors"
Dec. 5, Wingate University
A contemporary Christmas opera by Gian Carlo. Austin Auditorium. Free. 8 p.m. (704) 233-8038.

Christmas Around the Square
Dec. 5, 12, and 19, Shelby
Horse-and-carriage rides through Shelby's historic district. Caroling, live nativity, puppets. 5-9 p.m. (704) 484-3100.

Christmas in Seagrove
Dec. 5-14, Seagrove
Thirty local potteries welcome the holiday season with extended shopping hours and demonstrations. (910) 873-7966 or (910) 873-7425.

"Christmas Tuna"
Dec. 5-6, 12-13, Warrensville
Presented by the Ashe County Little Theatre. Blue Ridge Elementary School Auditorium. $5. 8 p.m. (910) 246-ARTS.

Arts & Crafts Show
Dec. 6, New Bern
"A Coastal Carolina Christmas." Crafts, food, entertainment, and door prizes. Craven County Fairgrounds. (919) 249-2802.

Candlelight Tour
Dec. 6, Oriental
Candlelight tour of town. 5-8 p.m. (919) 249-2869.

Christmas Dinner Dance
Dec. 6, West Jefferson
Ashe Civic Center. $100, couple; $50, single. (910) 246-4483.

Christmas Parade
Dec. 6, Boone
Downtown Boone. 1 p.m. (704) 262-4532.

Holiday Open House
Dec. 6, West Jefferson
Ashe Arts Center. 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (910) 246-ARTS.

Tryon Palace Holiday Celebration
Dec. 6-22, New Bern
Experience three centuries of Christmas traditions. Special events and candlelight tours at various times. $12, adults; $6, children. (800) 767-1560.

Tour of Homes
Dec. 7, West Jefferson
A tour of Ashe County homes decorated for the holidays. $10. 2-6 p.m. (910) 246-4483.

Holiday Concert
Dec. 7, West Jefferson
Ashe County Choral Society's holiday concert featuring sacred and secular favorites. First Baptist Church. Free. 7:30 p.m. (910) 246-ARTS.

Christmas Concert
Dec. 9, Wingate
Wingate University Band and Chorale. 7 p.m. At Austin Auditorium. (704) 233-8038.

Festival of Lights
Dec. 9, Boiling Springs
Choral performances, luminaries, tree lighting and reception. Dover Theatre, Gardner-Webb University. 7 p.m. (704) 434-4237.

Bethlehem Walk
Dec. 11-13, Arapahoe
Tour the streets of Bethlehem in an outdoor recreation of the first Christmas. Arapahoe Free Will Baptist Church. 7-9 p.m. (919) 745-5206.

Open House
Dec. 11-14, White Oak
See Harmony Hall Plantation in its Christmas glory. Located between White Oak and Tar Heel on River Road. Thursday – Saturday, 7-9 p.m. Sunday, 2-4 p.m.

Santa Train Benefit
Dec. 12-13, 18-21, Durham
Take a ride to the North Pole to see Santa, Mrs. Claus and Santa's house. Museum of Life and Science. 5-9 p.m. (919) 220-5429.

Open House
Dec. 13, Kings Mountain
Afternoon of 1800s Christmas customs, storytelling and crafts. Admission, $1. Kings Mountain State Park. 1-4 p.m. (803) 222-9300.

Christmas Sampler
Dec. 13, Williamston
Fundraiser featuring food, desserts and entertainment. Proceeds benefit the 1835 Asa Biggs House. 5:30-8 p.m. (800) 776-8566.

Open House
Dec. 13-14, Aberdeen
Visit a farmhouse, circa 1825, decorated for the season. Caroling and refreshments. 12-5 p.m. Malcolm Blue Farm. (910) 944-7558.

Ceramic art at Gallery Americas, Carrboro, through Jan. 2, 1998

Photos above: Wood sculpture and folk pottery at Mint Museum, Charlotte.

Festival of Trees & Lights, Pinehurst, Dec. 4-7

Candle Lighting & Open House

Dec. 14, Carthage.
At the Historic House in the Horseshoe. 1-8 p.m. (910) 947-2051.

Vegetable & Fruit Expo

Dec. 15-17, Greensboro
"Managing for Profits." Educational sessions and trade show. Joseph S. Koury Convention Center, Holiday Inn Four Seasons. (919) 772-2204.

"A Festival of Lights"

Dec. 20, Southern Pines
Presented by Footprints Contemporary Ballet. Performing Arts Center. $12, adults. $10, children and senior citizens. 7 p.m. (910) 695-8863.

Kwanzaa

Dec. 26, Robersonville
Celebrate the African-American holiday with arts, crafts, hair weaving and more. W.C. Chance Cultural Arts Center. (919) 795-3631.

New Year's Night

Dec. 31, Boone
Non-alcoholic New Year's Eve family celebration. Storytellers, musicians, games and more. $5 per family. 8 p.m. – 1 a.m. (704) 264-1789.

Military Collectors Show

Jan. 3-4, Raleigh
Featuring arms and memorabilia of Civil War, Indian Wars, WWI and WWII. Admission $5. ages 7-12, $1. At the NC State Fairgrounds. (704) 282-1339.

Ongoing Events

Christmas Shop

Through Dec. 19, Washington
Earrings, necklaces, napkin rings, old-fashioned sock monkeys, dolls, Christmas ornaments and more, all made by the blind and visually impaired. Special Children's Day on Dec. 6 with everything priced less than $5. Sponsored by the Beaufort County Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The Blind Center. Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (919) 946-6208.

Ceramic Art, Painting

Through Jan. 2, Carrboro
New raku glazed in fluid pastel metallic by Colleen Black-Semelka, plus charcoal drawings and oil paintings by Pauline Silberman. At Gallery Americas in Historic Carr Mill. (919) 929-1002.

Art Exhibition

Through Jan. 4, Winston-Salem
Displays include William Christenbury's "Reconstruction," celebrating the American South, and Sherri Wood's quilts and wearable art designs. Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art. (910) 725-1904.

Furniture & Wood Sculpture

Through Jan. 4, Charlotte
Acclaimed sculptor Randy Shull displays his greatest works. Mint Museum of Art. (704) 337-2009.

"The IMAX Nutcracker"

Through Jan. 9, Charlotte
Enjoy a new version of an old holiday classic shown on the giant IMAX Dome screen. $2 with admission to museum. Discovery Place. (704) 372-6261.

Christmas Tour and Dinner

Through Jan. 15, Rutherfordton
Twenty-six rooms featuring 18 Christmas trees and other beautiful decorations. Reservations required. Green River Plantation. $16, tour and lunch. $19, tour and dinner. $10, tour only. $6, children, lunch or dinner. (704) 286-1461.

Folk Pottery Exhibit

Through Feb. 22, Charlotte
View the works of folk potter Billy Ray Hussey. Mint Museum of Art. (704) 337-2009.

Deadlines:
Feb. issue.....Dec. 23
March issue .....Jan. 23
April.....Feb. 24

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Hank's Gardening Guide

by Hank Smith

If you haven't finished your general garden cleanup, now's the time to get the chore done. During a mild spell of weather, get your grounds presentable for the holiday season. Outdoor activities include planting balled-and-burlapped trees and shrubs. Setting out deciduous plants early in the dormant season will help promote better spring growth. Tulip bulbs that have been cooling in the refrigerator should be planted outdoors this month. Plant bulbs immediately after removing from refrigerator, or they will lose the benefit of cooling treatment. Since tulips make their greatest landscape impact when they are planted in clumps, group 12 or more bulbs together and keep to one color for maximum impact. Many seasonal decorations such as greenery, dried seed pods, fruits, cat tails, pine cones and plant material parts from roadsides and wooded areas add cheer to holiday festivities.

Keep potted plants comfortable

Overheating potted plants can be fatal to these sources of winter cheer. Most houseplants like a cool room where the temperature is between 55 and 70 degrees. When temperatures get above 70 degrees, most indoor plants fail. In winter, keep plants out of overheated rooms. Flowering Christmas plants will do better if moved to a cool location at night. Use the "finger-test" to determine if the plants need water. All houseplants will benefit when placed away from drafts and direct sources of indoor heat.

Choosing a building site

The first, most important step in building a structure is choosing the spot. Many factors, including your neighborhood, should be considered. Among the most important is the orientation needed to take full advantage of sun and shade. Often you must place the house in a position that is not parallel to the street front. The house need not be in the center of the lot. If the house is located near the front or side of the lot, the length of driveways and walks are reduced and more yard space is left in the back for outdoor living. One great advantage of pre-planning is roughly designating public, private and service areas to fit the house and family needs. Study the terrain, and then make and finalize your plans.

Choose correct shrub – plant with care

A common mistake in plant selections is using a tall, fast-growing shrub beneath a window. Windows are installed to admit light, air and extended views to the outdoors. There's a vast range of dwarf and semi-dwarf shrubbery that is appropriate for planting beneath windows. When planting, dig the hole approximately twice the size of the root system. Loosen soil in bottom of hole. Prepare soil by adding a bit of well-decayed cow or barnyard manure, available at garden centers. Set plants into the ground at the level where it was growing. Shallow-rooted plants such as azaleas, camellias and dogwoods are best planted 2–3 inches higher than they grow, allowing for settling in the loose soil. Always apply water when planting, even if the soil is moist. Water helps drive out air pockets. Prune the tips of container-grown or balled-and-burlapped plants to offset the shock to the root system. When moving an established shrub, cut away about one-third of the top growth. This helps compensate for unavoidable root injury and root loss. When planting a bareroot shrub, spread out roots as soil is filled into the hole. Apply water.

Treat holiday greens

Anti-desiccants used to prevent cold damage to shrubs can help to delay drying of cut greens and berries used in holiday decorations. Any greens used without stems in water like wreaths, garlands and swags will last longer if sprayed with this material. A weak solution of floor wax will also help delay drying of cut greens. Let greens soak in floor wax and dry before arranging.

Birdscaping

Plants that produce berries are attractive to birds, often bringing them to the garden to help control insects. Birds contribute flashes of color to the winter landscape. Select these plants from nursery lots now, while you can see them in full fruit. Several to consider are: anything from the holly group, pyracantha, viburnums, barberry, euonymus, blueberry and honeysuckle.

Care of holiday gift plants

Poinsettias are as sensitive to drafts as humans. Placing a poinsettia near a window at night, near an outside door, or an air vent will mean its quick demise. Temperatures below 60 degrees or above 70 degrees also shorten the life of the colorful bracts. Since green leaves turn yellow and drop if plant is allowed to wilt, keep soil moist at all times. Remove leaves to let stem "bleed." Singe cut with candle flame.

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The Last Word

The last word is THIGH. Each letter in the grid is used twice.

Merry Xmas

SANTA X S = CLAUS
31721 3 95163

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carolina *country* classifieds

$2 per word ($20 minimum per ad), prepaid. Maximum 75 words. Limit two ads per month per advertiser. Published on a space-available basis. Deadline: 25th of the month, 5 weeks before publication. For example, deadline for Jun is April 25. Orders received after deadline will be published the following issue. For information: Jennifer Hoey, (919) 875-3077. Send payment and message to

Carolina Country Classifieds
P.O. Box 27306
Raleigh, NC 27611

Carolina Kitchen

by Monica Russell

Recipe — Beefy Stuffed Mushrooms

Submitted by Johnsie Ford, Rockingham

1 pound lean ground beef
1 teaspoon chopped horseradish
1 teaspoon chopped fresh chives
1 clove garlic, minced
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
18 large mushrooms
⅓ cup dry white wine

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine ground beef, horseradish, chives, garlic and pepper in medium bowl until well blended. Remove stems from mushrooms. Stuff mushroom caps with beef mixture. Place stuffed mushrooms in shallow baking dish. Pour wine over mushrooms. Bake 20 minutes or until meat is no longer pink. (Yield 1-½ dozen)

The Carolina Country Cookbook

Beginning in January, "Carolina Kitchen" will feature recipes containing North Carolina products, prepared and tested by the N.C. Department of Agriculture.

But we will continue to accept recipes from readers for the Carolina Country Cookbook that we will publish and offer to members of electric cooperatives. Send your recipes, with your name and hometown, to Recipes, Carolina Country, P.O. Box 27306, Raleigh, NC 27611. Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com

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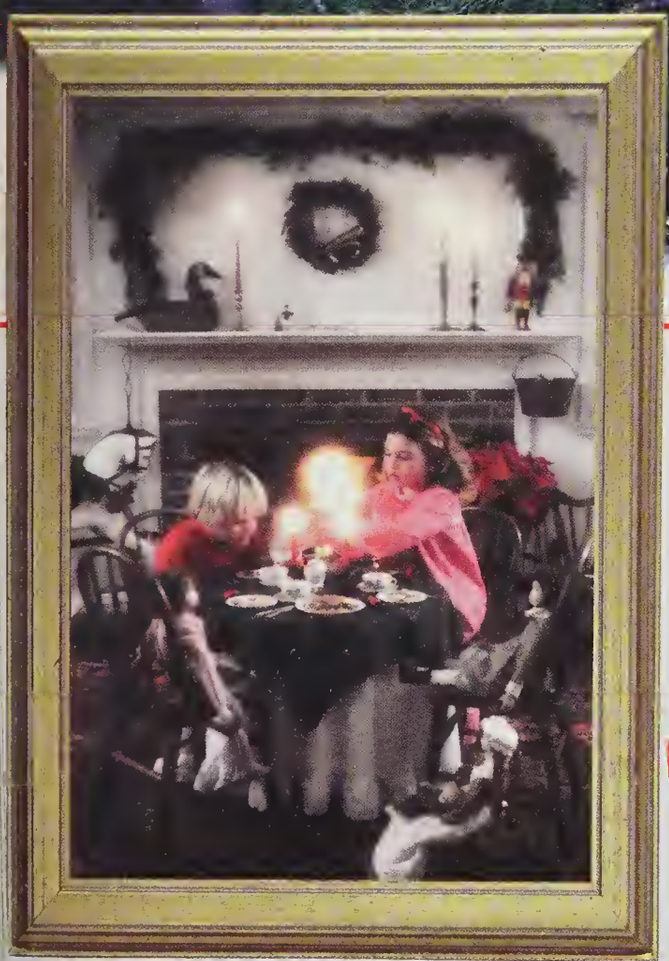

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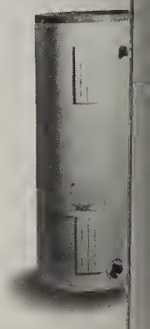

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